

**Economic and Social Council**

Distr.: Limited
29 June 2000

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination

Fortieth session

5 June-30 June 2000 (Part I)

Draft report**Addendum**

Rapporteur: Mr. Amjad Hussain B. Sial (Pakistan)

**Programme questions: proposed medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005
(Item 3 (b))****Programme 23. Public Information**

1. At its 20th and 21st meetings, on 21 June 2000, the Committee considered programme 23, Public information, of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005.

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Public Information introduced the programme and responded to questions raised during the Committee's consideration of the programme.

Discussion

3. Support was expressed for the goals and objectives of the programme, and the importance of a wide dissemination of information was emphasized. It was stressed that public information activities of the Organization were very important for enabling people everywhere to understand and learn about the role and objectives of the United Nations.

4. The view was expressed that, given the disparities among countries with regard to technological capabilities, radio broadcasting was one of the most important media for reaching a wide audience, especially in developing countries.

5. It was underscored that United Nations information centres played an important role in disseminating information on the role and the activities of the Organization, in particular at the local and regional levels. In that connection, the



view was expressed that the review on their possible integration with other United Nations system field offices should take into account the experience of the integrated centres as well as the agreement of the host countries. It was also stressed that any integration must ensure that the Department of Public Information is able to carry out its mission effectively.

Conclusions and recommendations

6. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the approval of programme 23, Public information, of the proposed medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, subject to the following modifications:

(a) Paragraph 23.2:

(i) In the second sentence, the word "galvanize" should be replaced with the word "promote";

(ii) In the third sentence, the words "governmental and" should be inserted after the word "media";

(iii) The last sentence should be *redrafted* as follows:

"Particular attention will be given to the areas of special interest to developing countries, in particular, the special needs of African countries and the least developed countries, keeping in view that most developing countries are not fully benefiting from the information revolution, and that the information technology gap is widening, and where appropriate, other countries with economies in transition in order to contribute to bridging the gap between developing and developed countries in the field of public information and communications."

(b) Paragraph 23.3: In the last sentence, the phrase "international news editors" should be replaced *with* the phrase "interested mass media";

(c) Paragraph 23.5: The words "timeliness, non-selectivity" should be inserted after the word "accuracy";

(d) Paragraph 23.8:

(i) At the end of the first sentence, the word "information" should be deleted before the word "services", which should then be followed by the insertion of the phrase "without prejudice to the traditional distribution of printed publications";

(ii) At the end of the last sentence, the word "and" should be deleted before the words "the question of Palestine", which should then be followed by the phrase "as well as multilateral development issues, disarmament, eradication of the AIDS pandemic, dialogue among civilizations and natural disasters";

(e) Paragraph 23.9: At the end of the first sentence, *add* the phrase "in accordance with the relevant decisions of the General Assembly" should be inserted;

(f) Paragraph 23.10: In the first sentence, after the phrase "*inter alia*", the phrase "through the traditional way of publication, and" should be inserted;

(g) Paragraph 23.11:

(i) In the first sentence, after the words "press releases;", the phrase "the creation of special pages on the United Nations web site;" should be inserted;

(ii) In the first sentence, after the word "briefings;", the phrase "on United Nations activities" should be inserted;

(iii) In the first sentence, the phrase "the training of broadcasters and journalists from developing countries" should be replaced *with* "the training of broadcasters and journalists from developing countries and countries with economies in transition";

(iv) After the first sentence, *insert* the following two sentences:

"The Department will ensure the appropriate use of information materials and continuous refinement of the activities aimed at promoting the work of the Organization. To accomplish this, there will be regular, systematic evaluation and review of information materials and activities in view of the specific objectives for which they were designed."

(h) Paragraph 23.12: At the end of the paragraph, the following should be added:

"; stronger partnerships between the Organization and various institutions of civil society would be created; faster and more effective flow of information through greater use of the latest communications technology, including the Internet, will be accomplished; and partnerships within the United Nations system and with organizations and institutions outside the system will be enhanced.";

(i) Paragraph 23.13: Between the word "increase" and the words "in the level of interest", the phrase "in the coverage of the United Nations activities by newspapers, radio, television and relevant Internet sites worldwide and" should be inserted;

(j) Paragraph 23.16: Following the paragraph, a new paragraph should be inserted, reading:

"23.16 *bis*. In order to ensure adequate dissemination of objective information about peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance missions, an effective information capacity will be developed.";

(k) Paragraph 23.17: After the second sentence, a new sentence should be inserted, reading:

"The Department, in the light of the experiences from the pilot project for the development of an international radio broadcasting capacity and the decision thereon by Member States, will study the enhancement of its broadcasting capacity.";

(l) Paragraph 23.17: Following the paragraph, a new paragraph should be inserted, reading:

"23.17 *bis*. United Nations information centres will continue to remain an important conduit in the dissemination of information for a cross-section of people in Member States, particularly in the developing countries. In that context, the Department will consult Member States in which United Nations information centres were merged or closed, with a view to reviving those centres, as appropriate."

(m) Paragraph 23.18:

(i) After the first sentence, a new sentence should be added, reading: **"In this regard, the Department will continue its work for achieving modular parity among the six official languages."**

(ii) The existing second sentence, after the words, "web site", the word "also" should be added;

(n) Paragraph 23.20: At the end of the paragraph, the following should be added:

", particularly of key audiences about peacekeeping operations; greater and faster access for media and other audiences to news emanating from the United Nations; a fuller news service through the further development and enhancement of the existing Daily Highlights; strengthened capacity of the Department for a rapid media response; capacity for effective delivery of high-quality audio, photo and video on demand; strengthened cooperation with international radio and television broadcasters for the coverage of United Nations activities; and development of an effective information capacity";

(o) Paragraph 23.21:

(i) After the words "geographical spread", the following should be inserted:

"; an increase in factual, positive portrayals of the Organization's activities by mass media, including radio, television, newspapers and such evolving tools as the Internet; review of the cases of United Nations information centres, where those were merged or closed, in consultation with concerned Member States;"

(ii) At the end of the paragraph, the phrase "enhanced effectiveness of information capabilities in the field of peacekeeping operations." should be added;

(p) Paragraph 23.28: At the end of the paragraph, the phrase **"; and greater coordination among the depository libraries, information centres and United Nations system field offices."** should be added;

(q) Paragraph 23.29: At the end of the paragraph, the following should be added:

"and to develop support for the Organization. The Department will improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the Organization's publication and distribution processes"